

(36.1%) were significantly more likely to report for watching bidi advertisement in social gatherings.

Table 10: Access and Availability, UP(India)GYTS, 2002

Category	Percent of Current Smokers who Usually Smoke at Home	Percent of Current Smokeless tobacco users who chew/apply tobacco at home	Percent of Current tobacco users who Purchased tobacco products in a Store	Percent of Current tobacco users who Bought tobacco in a Store Who Were Not Refused purchase Because of Their Age
Total	87.0(± 12.0)	7.7(± 4.8)	36.2(± 11.3)	42.5(± 27.5)
Male	84.6(± 14.6)	6.7(± 6.1)	33.1(± 11.9)	43.2(±25.7)
Female	95.9(± 5.7)	14.8(± 17.1)	51.9(±20.5)	39.0(± 40.7)

Most students 9 in every 10, smoked at their own homes. Nearly 6 in every 10 of current tobacco users got their tobacco from a store in UP. About one third of the current smokers said they bought their own cigarettes and were not refused because of age. (Table10)

Discussion

This study provides first representative database on tobacco prevalence among school going children in the age group of 13-15 years in UP state.

The present study finds that a significant proportion of the youth in the state use tobacco products. Nearly 4 in every 10 of the youth that participated in the survey admitted to have ever used tobacco and nearly 2 in every 10 of the students was currently using any tobacco product, mostly(19.7%) used smokeless tobacco and 10.6% revealed to smoke

any tobacco product. Surprisingly for all categories of tobacco use, there is no significant difference among boys and girls. Tobacco use by girls is not a social norm in India.

Uninhibited tobacco promotion in different media is playing key role in breaking the social norm. One other noteworthy feature that emerged from the survey is the high percentage of addiction among them.

UP is one of the states where a lot of tobacco is cultivated ⁴. High prevalence of tobacco among the youth in the state could therefore be attributed to easier access of raw tobacco to the young people and high rates of tobacco use in the community by adults ⁵. Adults smoking before adolescents create an environment in which adolescent perceive smoking as social norm. This becomes more alarming when adolescent are ignorant about harmful effects of tobacco use and that makes a great difference. In the present study only 4.5% current smokers definitely thought that smoking is harmful for them in contrast to 71% never users and only 11.8% current smokeless tobacco users thought that chewing/applying is harmful for them in contrast to 67.5% never users.

The survey results also show that nearly three fourth of the ever tobacco users reported they started tobacco use/smoking at an early age of less than 10. On the possibility for the non-smokers to initiate smoking by the year 2003, almost 12% said they would.

Although a significant proportion of young people use tobacco the majority (8 out of 10) of the current smokers who were interviewed said they desire to quite smoking but very few of those who tried were successful. The reasons might be because they (young people) consider smoking as a normal social behaviour and tend to correlated smoking with independence and an appearance of confidence, an image that is intensively

projected in tobacco advertising and promotional activities, and reinforced by movie/music idols who smoke.

Most of the homes and places frequented by the youth interviewed do not have anti-smoking rules within their premises; almost 2 in every 5 and 1 in every 2 students said they were around others who smoke in their homes and other places (other than their homes) respectively, in a week prior to the interviews. The apex court in India has banned smoking in public place ¹⁷. However the efforts to protect non-smokers from the health effects of passive smoking are not being supported by the UP government, that is, at the policy level. Some organizations like Lucknow University have banned smoking on the campus. However enforcement is limited to students and not to the teachers ²².

Threatened by campaigns against direct and passive smoking, Indian tobacco companies and multinationals made major propaganda challenging the fact that passive smoking increases the risks of lung cancer in India last year ²³.

Public awareness programs and activities on the harmful effects of tobacco is being carried out sporadically by NGOs and by some health organizations. Few international and national NGOs like INCAT, Indian Society Against Smoking are involved in the anti-smoking awareness campaigns for the reduction in the consumption of tobacco in the State and educating communities involving all section of people especially youth ²⁶, in line with the Global fight against tobacco smoking. INCAT established a coalition ²⁸ of networks on the fight against tobacco between the public, colleges and schools, women's group etc.

The anti-smoking campaign is however, been diluted by the tobacco Industry who continue to counter attack the campaigns and the government who supports the Tobacco

industry to continue carrying out smoking advertisements in the media, on billboards, at social events etc portraying “Positive” images of using tobacco products; young people are easily influenced by these messages, they are made to believe that boys who smoke look more attractive. Youth targeted sports sponsored by tobacco companies and advertising through TV depicting a high life style of smoking⁶ influence the children’s mind and helps initiate smoking in India^{14,15}. In the present study three of every ten students in UP thought that smoking makes students (boys and girls) more attractive and friendly.

On July 18, 2002, the Allahabad High Courts in Uttar Pradesh have banned sale and manufacture of pan masala/ Gutkha but the same has been stayed by the Supreme Court²⁴. Very recently Uttar Pradesh government has banned chewing tobacco and breath fresheners, because of mouth cancer risks^{24,25}. But the implementation is nearly at zero level. Youth freely buy cigarettes and gutka from any tobacco retail outlets. The situation has been aggravated by the influx of vendors distributing free tobacco products samples. Nine in every 10 cigarette smokers and 5 in every smokeless tobacco users had been offered free cigarette and gutka samples respectively. Since cigarettes are sold loose, there by making access by everyone easy and relatively “cheap” vendors find this as an advantage to sell more tobacco products and operating at any point. It is hoped that when the comprehensive tobacco control bill will be passed by parliament and subsequently by UP Legislative assembly, the malpractice of selling harmful products like tobacco to young people would be arrested or reduced and tobacco advertising would be regulated. School environment in UP is making considerable contribution on the providing pupils with messages on the harmful effects of tobacco as over 6 of every 10 students said that

they were taught tobacco or health as part of lesson in classroom. Nearly half of the students said they had discussed the effects/dangers of smoking tobacco in a classroom. Knowledge on harmful effect of tobacco use among students in UP was reported low. Slightly over half of the students thought that smoking and chewing is definitely harmful to their health. The survey results also show that family members (parents/guardians) assist greatly in educating their children on the dangers of smoking/chewing tobacco. Over nine in every 10 tobacco users and six in every 10 never user students said that family members had discussed the harmful effects of smoking or chewing tobacco. Communities also assist in educating children. Almost all current cigarette smokers (97.8%) said that they received help or advice to stop smoking either from parents or friends, from health programs and health personnel. But, some parents/guardians set a very bad example for their children; nearly 40% of students reported that their parents smoke/chew tobacco. This needs to be continued and extended to other parts of UP. There are several recent reports, predicting an increase in oral cancer incidence in India. This prediction is based upon observation of an increasing prevalence of oral submucous fibrosis, especially in younger individuals, caused by industrially manufactured smokeless tobacco products¹⁰⁻¹³. Majority of tobacco chewers in the present study reported gutka chewing confirming the countrywide trend of increasing gutka use. Gutka is one of the most highly advertised products in almost all media and it is noteworthy that tobacco users reported watching more tobacco advertisement compared to never users. Health professionals in UP feel that primary prevention is the most suitable way to control tobacco related cancer as there is no adequate infrastructure to cope up with tobacco related cancer burden in UP²⁷. Primary prevention through awareness programs

are being offered by some organizations but they are limited to some area of UP only. In Mainpuri district of UP an educational intervention for two years resulted in 32.5% boys and 18.8% girls quitting tobacco habit ⁶.

In Western settings, intervention programs have been successful, at least in delaying initiation of smoking ¹⁸⁻²⁰. Comprehensive school tobacco control policy comprising a combination of tobacco-free school policies and an evidence-based curriculum linked to community wide programs involving families, peers, and organizations with counter marketing campaigns and community-based activities have shown a success in reducing smoking in schools in USA²¹. There is greater potential for school-based awareness programs in UP as well as whole of India followed by cessation initiative.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

- (1) Intensification of education and awareness campaigns as majority of them are ignorant of the risks associated with the use of tobacco products/ ETS. There is need for full involvement of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and NGO's religious and traditional authorities for the campaigns to be more effective.
- (2) Schools in UP need to have curricular practices and tobacco policy prohibiting tobacco use by students, school personnel and any visitor in school premises. And also since a significant proportion of the youth start smoking at the age of 10 (or less), there is